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ABSTRACT

Confucianism has been identified as the major cultural factor that explains the economic success of the Asian Five Dragons (Hong Kong, Japan, Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan). This paper explores the impact of Confucianism on the organizational communication in these nations, based on the four key principles of confucian teaching: the hierarchical relationship, the family system, "Jen" (benevolence), and the emphasis on education. The paper notes that the confucian emphasis on education at all levels has become one of the most important characteristics of Chinese culture, and the tradition is carried over to every Asian nation, especially the Asian Five Dragons. The paper further discusses the influence of these four principles of Confucianism on management behaviors and communication in the organization. The paper also explains the implication of Confucianism's influence on organizational communication. Three tables presenting Confucian principles and their relation to interpersonal communication, management, and organizational communication are included. (Contains 42 references.) (Author/RS)

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The Impact of Confucianism on Organizational Communication

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Abstract

Confucianism has been identified as the major cultural factor that explains the economic success of the Asian Five Dragons. This paper explores the impact of Confucianism on the organizational communication in these nations, based on the four key principles of confucian teachings: the hierarchical relationship, the family system, Jen, and the emphasis on education. This study further discusses the influence of these four principles of Confucianism on management behaviors and communication in the organization. Implications of Confucianism influence on the organizational communication are also explained.

The Impact of Confucianism on Organizational Organization

The progress of technology has made global markets more accessible and the business world more interrelated and international in the last decade. As Adler (1983) indicates, the increasing internationalization of business means an increasing multiculturalism within organizations and an increasing interaction between managers and employees of different cultures. This increasing multiculturalism in organizations calls for understandings among cultures and new strategies for organizational operations. From Adler's perspective the influence of Confucianism on the modern Asian organizations is a case that deserves a further investigation by communication scholars.

In the Pacific basin nations, the internationalization of business has occurred and in recent years in this region several newly industrializing nations have emerged in East Asia. Among these Asian nations five have been experiencing what is called an "economic miracle." These political entities, dubbed "Five Dragons," include Hong Kong, Japan, Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan. According to a World Bank report (1988), between 1980 and 1986 period, the average annual growth rate of per capita gross national product (GNP) was 6.1% for Hong Kong, 3.7% for Japan, 5.3% for Singapore, 8.2% for South Korea, and 6.8% for Taiwan, while only 1.8% for European countries and 3.1% for the United States.

Why are these particular countries so successful economically? Many scholars have attempted to answer this

question from different perspectives, including the value of economic growth and the fast response to the international market (e.g., Chan, 1990; Wu, 1988). Although different scholars provide various factors to explain the unexpected economic growth of the Five Dragons, most of them agree that, for the root cause, one must turn to the domain of culture. It is the purpose of this inquiry to examine the impact of cultural environment on the economic success of the Asian Five Dragons. Because these economically successful nations in Northeast Asia share the same cultural heritage of Confucianism, this inquiry aims at investigating how Confucianism as a cultural factor contributes to the success of these nations. More specifically, this study explores the impact of Confucianism on the organizational life and organizational communication in these nations.

Cultural Modifiers

To what degree do the cultural factors of a society influence its organizational life? Child (1981) indicates that different cultural orientations will lead to specific organizational effects. Gorden (1984) summarizes five hypotheses regarding the relationship between cultural orientations and organizational effects specified by Child: (1) If the society considers human nature as good, then the organizations will advocate employee autonomy and reliance on intrinsic motivation; (2) if the society believes that the human

being is the master of nature, then the organizations will lead to adventurous and proactive management; (3) if the society orients to the future, then the organizations will emphasize long-term planning, workforce planning, and assessment centers; (4) if the society is "being" oriented, then the organizations will emphasize interpersonal sensitivity, and concern about morale and communication climate; and (5) if the society orients to individualism, then the organizations will minimize authority and hierarchy.

Hofstede's (1980) large-scale study shows the consistent relationship between cultural orientations and organizational life. The results of Hofstede's national value surveys from a multinational company in some 40 different countries reveal four dimensions of cultural values that are related to the organizational life: power distance, individualism, masculinity, and uncertainty avoidance.

Furthermore, the Chinese Culture Connection (1987) also has collected data from 22 countries and found four dimensions of cultural values that show influence on organizational life, especially in Asian countries. Three of the four dimensions are similar to Hofstede's power distance, individualism, and masculinity. The fourth one is labeled "Confucian Work Dynamism." The Chinese Culture Connection not only argues that it is this dimension that distinguishes the cultural orientation between Western and Eastern organizations, but also finds that this dimension is strongly related to the

economic growth of the Asian Five Dragons over the period between 1965 and 1985. These studies indicate that a strong connection between cultural factors and the logic of organizing exists.

The Dominant Culture of the Five Dragons

It is a common belief that specific nations possess specific cultural traits that are resistent to change. "Neo-Confucianism," rooted in the teachings of Confucius, is used by Kahn (1979) to describe the cultural traits of East Asian nations. According to Kahn, East Asian nations have common cultural roots that can be traced to Confucianism. This shared cultural heritage has contributed to the economic success of these nations in the international market over the past 30 years.

Confucius was born in China around 500 B.C. His teachings are mainly concerned with practical ethics of daily life without any addition of religion elements. Confucianism includes then a set of pragmatic rules for the daily behaviors of common people. Hofstede and Bond (1988) indicate that the teachings of Confucius are comprised of four key principles: the hierarchical relationship among people, the family as a basic unit, Jen, and the emphasis on education. We now use these principles as a framework to explain how Confucianism influences interpersonal relationships and organizational lives in the Asian Five Dragons (see Table 1).

Insert Table 1 About Here

Hierarchical Relationship

According to Confucius, human relationships should be regulated by the Five Code of Ethics, Wu Lun, which is based on the five basic relationships: ruler/subject, father/son, husband/wife, older brother/younger brother, and between friends. These relationships are assumed to be unequal and complementary. Condon (1977) indicates that complementary relationships tend to "maximize differences in age, sex, role, or status and serve to encourage the mutuality of the relationship, the interdependency" (p. 54). Juniors are required to owe their seniors respect and obedience, and seniors owe their juniors consideration and protection. In other words, the Confucian Five Code of Ethics stipulates that the ruler has to show justice, and the subject shows loyalty; father shows love, and son shows filial piety; husband shows initiation, and wife shows obedience; the older brother shows brotherly love, and younger brother shows reverence in return; and friends show mutual faith to each other.

The application of Wu Lun to the organizational life shows five types of ordering relationships: particularistic relationships, complementary social reciprocity, ingroup/outgroup distinction, essential intermediary and formality, and overlap of personal and public relationships

(Yum, 1988). Particularistic relationships are relatively predictable. They are governed by a set of specific communication rules and patterns that provide individuals with directions concerning interaction. This kind of relationship may be extended to friends, family, co-workers, or superior/subordinate, along with many other relationships. The function of maintaining a particularistic relationship is a way for East Asians to avoid embarrassing encounters or serious conflicts (Jocobs, 1979; Hwang, 1988). Moreover, particularistic relationships is often used as a social resource which is a "potential power in persuasion, influence, and control" in the organizational life (Chung, 1991, p. 9).

Complementary social reciprocity, the second type of orderly relationship resulting from the Five Code of Ethics, refers to the process of give-and-take in a social interaction. Based on the hierarchical relationship, Confucian philosophy views interpersonal relationships as asymmetrical and reciprocally obligatory in which people always feel indebted to others. When East Asians receive a gift from others, for example, they show a deep appreciation and heartily try to find an opportunity to return the favor (Shiang, 1982). This obligation of returning the favor to others is also strongly reflected in the superior/subordinate relationship in an organization. Usually, a superior has certain responsibilities or obligations, such as protection and a holistic concern for subordinates; employees, in turn, have obligations, such as loyalty or commitment to a superior.

With the Confucian teaching of interpersonal relationships, the existence of an individual must be defined by another in East Asian societies. This characteristic of mutual interdependence between people leads to a sharp distinction between ingroup and outgroup members. Such interdependence "requires that one be affiliated with relatively small and tightly knit groups of people and have a relatively long identification with those groups" (Yum, 1987, p. 94). Individuals who join the group or an organization are assigned different positional roles, and are required to fulfill certain obligations. Moreover, they are subordinate to the group in which commitments and loyalty are required. Due to these requirements for group members, people are only able to belong to a limited number of organizations throughout their lives. This long-term, reciprocal relationship between the individual and the group is further developed into the lifetime employment system in Japanese organizations.

The Confucian principles of Yi (righteousness) and Li (propriety) dictate that individuals must follow a proper way and a proper ritual in a social interaction. An intermediary is a product of this requirement. It is a popular practice in East Asia to use an intermediary to help people initiate a new relationship or solve a conflict. This kind of indirect interaction and the formality of social life is considered a way of avoiding an embarrassing confrontation, a way of "saving face." A smooth and predictable verbal and nonverbal

interaction is usually reached through the value of indirect communication and formality, factors which explain why it is very common for the East Asians to use formal codes of conduct, titles, honorifics in their interactions with others.

Finally, the Confucian idea of social reciprocity leads to a vague boundary between personal and public relationships. According to Yum (1988), this orientation leads to a strong taste for a pure business transaction in which people try to develop a personal rather than a business-like atmosphere. To build a good and warm personal relationship is the key to success in a business transaction. In Japan, for example, consensus is often reached before a meeting is summoned. Similarly, in other East Asian nations, one must develop a mutual understanding, establish a personal relationship, keep frequent contacts, develop personal trust, and build mutual interests in social activities with one's counterpart to develop an effective business relationship.

The Family System

Confucian teachings consider "family" the prototype of all social organizations. Confucianism is like social cement that fixes family members in the network of their appropriate hierarchical relationships. Furthermore, concepts such as loyalty, obedience, and filial piety practiced in the family are transferred to social organizations in which habits of disciplined subordination and acceptance of authority are fostered (MacFarquhar, 1980).

Three discernible value orientations influenced by Confucian teachings can be identified within the family system: a lineal structure of relational orientation, a specific positional role behavior, and an authoritarian orientation (Chen, 1988). According to Hwang (1989), this collectivistic sense of the family structure that is applied to social organizations is one of the main reasons for the economic success of the Asian Five Dragons. Within this collectivistic family system, one becomes only a member of a family in which one must learn to restrain oneself, to subdue individuality in order to maintain the harmony in the family (Hofstede & Bond, 1988). The extension of the family system to business produces a popular practice of "family enterprise" in the Asian Five Dragons. Chen (1991) stipulates five characteristics of "family enterprise" that are heavily influenced by Confucian teachings:

1. Private relationship. The private relationship is based on the concept of "similarity' or "affinity," and it includes: (1) blood relationships -- consisting of one's own family, relatives outside the household, wife's relatives, and relatives of difference surnames (Chen, 1988); (2) demographic relationships -- for those who are from the same area of country; (3) colleague relationships -- for those who work in the same organization; (4) teacher-student relationships; and (5) classmate relationships (Chiao, 1988).

2. Paternalistic leadership. In this kind of organization

a manager always acts like a father who expresses concern for employees with families and the quality of the products the employees produce. This makes it difficult for workers to separate their personal and professional lives.

3. Harmony, the first virtue. Only harmony among group members can produce fortune. It is believed that personal harmony is the best way to maintain dignity, self-respect, and prestige.

4. Distrust of outgroup members. This characteristic shows that most high and middle management are selected from the network of the private relationships.

5. Relative loyalty and commitment between managers and employees. The concern with employee's personal benefit from top management usually requires the unconditional loyalty or spirit of sacrifice from employees.

Jen (Benevolence)

Jen is one of the cardinal concepts of Confucian teachings. It is a collective concept which is comprised of various virtues, but "love" is the core meaning of Jen. To oneself, Jen is self-restraint and self-discipline; to others, benevolence; to parents, filial piety; to elders, brotherly love; to personal duty, loyalty; and to interpersonal behaviors, trust (Chen, 1987). Jen is like a seed from which all the virtuous qualities of the ideal humans are originated.

Basically, the concept of Jen interweaves with two other cardinal concepts of Confucian teachings: Yi (righteousness) and Li (propriety). Only through Yi and Li is the meaning of Jen

rectified. Yi is the binding force of social interaction; it refers to the righteousness, faithfulness, loyalty, and justice in the process of social interaction. Yi serves two major functions: guidance of behavior and connection of all appropriate behaviors. As a directive behavior Yi stipulates what one ought and ought not do. In this sense, Yi is the internal criterion of appropriateness of Jen which affects all human behaviors.

Li is the external form of Jen. It refers to propriety, rite, and respect for social norms, and it is "the rule of the universe and the fundamental regulatory etiquette of human behavior" (Yum, 1988, p. 378). The practice of Li allows the intimate connections of individual character and social duties by means of rules, including propriety of conduct, propriety of speech, and propriety of example.

Based on Confucian teachings, "reciprocity," referring to mutual expectations of social responsibility among people, is the yardstick of propriety of conduct. Confucian teachings place the performance of duties due others above all other duties and treat this performance as a necessary means of self-development. Confucius explicates this idea by indicating that in order to confirm or enlarge oneself, one has to confirm and enlarge others.

Confucian teachings admonish followers to be cautious about their speech, because the "smartness" of speech elicits hatred from others. One's speech should be simple, direct, and to the point. In other words, one should express the precise meaning rather than what seems to be said or variant from it. Straightforwardness or

too much candor during discourse, however, is dangerous, since it is often not regulated by the rule of appropriateness. Confucius warns that straightforwardness, without the rules of propriety, will often lead to rudeness.

Confucian teachings also emphasize the important role of a listener in the process of discourse. A listener must be able to understand accurately what a person says, because it is impossible to know men without knowing the force of words. Moreover, the ability to know when to speak and the ability to read a speaker's facial expression are also important to the listener, especially when communicating with a superior. Confucius uses "impetuousness" to describe those who speak before spoken to; "reticence" for those who do not reply when spoken to; and "blindness" for those who speak without observing the superior's facial expression. Finally, Confucian teachings urge a superior to be cautious when giving commands to subordinates. Confucius indicates that once commands are issued, they must be carried into effect and cannot be retracted.

Lastly, the propriety of example refers to the kind of people with whom a person should associate. Confucian teachings indicate that three kinds of friends will benefit a person: the upright, the devoted, and the learned; and three kinds of friends will harm a person: the fawning, the flattering, and the too eloquent. Confucius repeatedly utters the admonition for being with those who employ artful speeches and insinuating looks. He considers that words and an insinuating

appearance are barriers for being virtuous. Prudence, in regard to conversation and association with others, is strongly recommended in Confucian teachings.

An admonition to a friend or superior is encouraged in Confucian teachings, but the admonition must be regulated by appropriateness. Confucius further warns against unnecessary admonitions, because frequent remonstrances and reproofs often lead to disgrace. All these Confucian ideas provide a set of rules that guide the behaviors and relationships between superiors and subordinates in modern organizations of the Asian Five Dragons. More influences are discused in the next section.

The Emphasis on Education

The perfectibility and educability of human beings is central to Confucian thinking. This emphasis on education has become one of the most important characteristics of Chinese culture, and the tradition is carried over to every Asian nation, especially the Asian Five Dragons. The World Bank reports that in 1985 the number in secondary school as percentage of age group in the Asian Five Dragons is: Hong Kong, 69%; Japan, 96%; Singapore, 71%; South Korea, 94%; and Taiwan, 99%; According to Tai (1989), the Confucian emphasis on education is considered a substantial facilitator to the process of economic modernization, which underlines a rudimentary economic principle: "Human resource development is a slow, long-term, and costly process, but the benefit is great, cumulative, and nearly always outweighs the cost" (p. 25). Only the skillful and intelligent

human beings are able to use the economic resources productively.

The philosophy of Confucian education is based on the idea of "providing education for all people without discrimination," and completely emphasizes the teaching of ethics; thus, the purpose of education is to help students develop an ideal personality. Through this educational system, virtues with regard to one's tasks in life are integrated. Those virtues attributing to the economic growth of the Asian Five Dragons include skill acquisition, hard working, moderation, patience, and perseverance.

The four key principles of Confucius teachings show a direct impact on organizational communication, especially on the principle of management and interpersonal relationship and communication in the Asian Five Dragons.

The Impact of Confucianism on Organizational Communication

A conclusion that can be drawn from the previous discussion of the four key principles of Confucian teachings is that "human" is the focal point of Confucian teachings. When applied to the process of management, the Confucian style of management is therefore termed "humanistic management" or "ethical management" (Tseng, 1991). The humanistic emphasis of Confucian teachings is parallel to the Human Relations Model of organizing developed in the West. As Conrad (1989) points out, the Human Relations Model focuses on the "individual identities and needs of employees and looks to improvements in personal relations and interpersonal communication as a way of simultaneously meeting

organizational needs for control and coordination and employee needs for predictability, creativity, autonomy, and sociability" (p. 157). This section examines the influence of Confucian teachings on management principles and interpersonal relationships and communication in the organizations of Asian Five Dragons.

Influence on Management Principles

Two aspects of management are discussed: the ideal state of management and leadership (see Table 2). Based on Confucian principles, the ideal state of management is to develop a secure working environment for all employees in the organization through the process of self-cultivation and self-improvement. Tseng (1986) labels this thought as "M theory." M represents three concepts: men, medium, and management. M theory indicates that management is a process of making a harmonious balance among people. M theory entails three assumptions. First, human nature is mutable. The responsibility of a manager is to lead employees to a perfect working environment through the practice of Jen. Second, a committed employee is able to adapt to changing environments. A manger has to inform employees clearly about the goal of and behavioral criteria in the company. The adaptability to contingencies is regulated by Yi. Third, the mutual understanding between a superior and subordinate is a key to organizational success. This assumption is based on the understanding of one's role and position in the organization. A manager needs to specify role behaviors and to expect the fulfillment of those role behaviors. The achievement of this goal is regulated by

cooperation, reciprocity, and mutual trust, as originated from the concept of Li. The ideal state of management, therefore, is the integration of practicing the three core concepts of Confucian teaching: Jen, Yi, and Li.

Insert Table 2 About Here

Although the hierarchical structure of interpersonal relationships between a superior and subordinate makes Asian social groups function smoothly with more authoritarian interaction patterns, Confucian teachings specify that an effective leadership must follow two requirements: "cheng ming" (rectification of name) and "cheng" (sincerity). Only when terms are correctly used for the positional roles of leadership and understood by employees can the reality of organizing be really described. The rectification of name is a process for leaders to correctly perceive the role behaviors and gain the legitimate authority from it (Hsieh & Fang, 1991).

Sincerity is referred to as honesty to self and truthfulness toward employees. According to Chan (1952), the function of sincerity is to exercise fully one's native intelligence and good knowledge, conscience, and native ability to do good. Confucian teachings indicate that a sincere mind is the precursor of "Kan Ying" (influence and response). Sincerity is the basis for receiving from employees a positive response to a manager's influence. The practice of sincerity in leadership reveals the

abilities of "esteeming the five virtues" and "avoiding the four evils" indicated by Confucius. The five virtues are: (1) To treat as advantageous what employees find advantageous, (2) to put only those able employees to work, (3) to have desires for achieving humanness-at-its-best without greed, (4) to be dignified but not proud of regarding quantity and size of property, and (5) to inspire awe from employees without being brutal. The four evils to be avoided are: (1) Cruelty -- to punish employees for the lack of instructions, (2) outrageousness -- to expect accomplishment from employees without proper advisement, (3) deterioration -- to insist upon completion after instruction to proceed slowly, and (4) pettiness -- to promise a reward but to begrudge its payment.

Influence on Relationship and Communication

Based on the foregoing discussions, six characteristics of interpersonal relationships and communication as a result of the Confucian influence can be identified in the organizations of the Asian Five Dragons: Explicit communication rules, complementary relationships, ingroup and outgroup distinction, use of an intermediary, vague boundary between personal and public relationships, and similar communication contexts. These characteristics and their influences on the organizational life and communication cost are discussed as follows (see Table 3):

Insert Table 3 About Here

First, explicit communication rules are predominant in interpersonal communication. Because human relationships in Confucian societies are regulated by the Five Code of Ethics (Wu Lun), interpersonal relationships are governed by a set of explicit communication rules and are, thus, relatively predictable. Many rules in interpersonal communication are transferred to the organizational setting. The hierarchical ruler/subject and father/son relationships, for example, are applied to the superior/subordinate relationships. Since these rules are explicit, learning rules becomes important and necessary for the group members. Following these rules would lead to safer communication which minimizes uncertainty and guess work in the organization. Communication cost is then reduced.

The hierarchical superior/subordinate relationship is especially reflected in Korean and Japanese organizations. For example, according to Klopf (1991), in a Japanese business setting the relationships are usually based on rank which is determined by sex, age, educational background, and length of service in the company. Moreover, the hierarchical structure of relationship requires strict communication patterns. This explains why subordinates use honorifics and become more restrained when talking to superiors.

Second, since interpersonal relationships are complementary, the management or the superiors in the organization give holistic and fraternalistic concerns to employees or subordinates in exchange for their loyalty. Socio-emotional functions of communication are almost inherent in the management-employee or superior-subordinate

relationships. For example, Chung (1992) indicates that superiors in Taiwanese and Japanese companies often get involved in the resolution of subordinates' family problems. In Japan, "when an employee dies on the job, the company would hire his wife, although not necessarily to do the same job in the same company" (p. 7). The cost of socio-emotional communication may be great, but many frustrations, dissatisfactions, or conflicts are then prevented.

Third, due to the tendency of clearly distinguishing ingroup and outgroup members, organizational members are easier to be motivated toward the goal of team-building, and commitment to the group can be easily transferred to the organization as a whole. Organizational climate then is more supportive. The Japanese term "kaisha" well displays the concept of "ingroup" in Japanese organizations. According to Nakane (1970), kaisha is

> "my" or "our" company, the community to which one belongs primarily; and which is all-important in one's life. Thus in most cases the company provides the whole social existence of a person, has authority over all aspects of his life; he is deeply involved in the association. (p. 4)

The clear distinction between ingroup and outgroup and the "we" feeling among group members also affect management-employee relationship and control system. As Rehder (1981) points out, when comparing the traditional American and Japanese organizations, Japanese organizations rely on high group motivation and standards with social work control, while, in American organizations, employment commitment depends on economic conditions and

performance. As a result of this group motivation, many Japanese workers proudly identify themselves as their "company's man" (Goldhaber, 1993). The advantage of "easy motivating within group" is not without cost. Ingroup motivation is usually accomplished at the expense of outgroup exclusion. This is why, in Confucianism-influenced societies and organizations, outsiders or foreigners are more difficult to be accepted. The input from the environment is, thus, reduced to a minimum, resulting a relatively closed communication system.

Fourth, because an intermediary is customarily used for initiating a new relationship or resolving a conflict, communication styles become non-confrontational. This code would reduce conflicts and, thus, minimize communication costs. The non-confrontational communication style is based on Confucius concept "Ho" (harmony). According to Chung (1992), in Chinese organizations conflict is considered harmful and leads to a negative result in the organization. For example, a superior's disciplinary action to a subordinate in the Chinese organization is usually practiced by following the saying "Extol the merit in public hall; rectify the wrongdoing in the private room."

Fifth, the vague boundary between personal and public relationships in Confucian societies makes contact with organizational members more frequent. This, in turn, functions to identify mutual interests, expand overlapping communication contexts, build trust, and reach consensuses. For example, Japanese superiors often invite subordinates to have a drink or to

engage in other social situations after work. This socio-emotional communication activities on a relatively personal level characteristically create a common culture, which reduces uncertainty and conflict and increases morale and effectiveness.

Lastly, the heavy emphasis on education and equal opportunity of education has produced educated communicators who can communicate within more similar contexts than if education gaps are wide. The cost of education may be enormous, but education could facilitate communication, especially in terms of the organizational socialization and organizational training. The previous discussions of emphasis on education in the Asian Five Dragons have explained the impact of education on the organizational life.

The six characteristics present a general picture of the Confucianism-influenced organizational communication, resembling the Human Relations School of organizational thought developed in the West. The emphasis on interpersonal relationships in Confucian teachings, for example, is also advocated by Follett and Barnard, the pioneers of the Human Relations School (Bostdorff, 1985). The emphasis on human relationship in Confucianism-influenced organizational communication is also echoed by Mayo, the main pioneer of the human relations theory of organization. Some of his assumptions, as summarized by Eisenberg and Goodall (1993), include that employees are motivated by social needs and obtain the sense of self-identity through interactions with others.

The Human Relations School, however, does not adequately explain why communication can boost effectiveness or productivity. This

investigation of Confucianism with respect to organizational communication identifies an Eastern version of "The Human Relations School." This version provides abundant information about how emphasis on interpersonal relationships might boost effectiveness, especially through the approach of communication cost.

Inferring from what discussed above, the Confucian societies and organizations invest heavily in communication through rule learning, long-term interaction, outgroup exclusion, intermediary, personal contact, and education. The investment on these aspects of organizational communication are related to communication cost. "The rule-learning cost" is paid off by the reduced guess work and uncertainty. "The long-term interaction" cost can reduce communication apprehension and increase liking and mutual respect. "The outgroup exclusion cost" may help motivation. "The intermediary" cost can reduce conflict or smooth the conflict-resolution process. "The personal contact cost" is paid back by loyalty and commitment, and, finally, "the education cost" is compensated by the reduced communication gap, misunderstanding and clarification effort. In view of this model (see Table 4), all these costs are in problem prevention rather than in problem solution. This emphasis on employees' satisfaction with the social and interpersonal relationships of peers has been found to significantly influence the organization's productivity (Carey, 1967).

Insert Table 4 About Here

As can be observed from this analysis, in Confucianism-influenced organizations the human aspect of the employee's problem is the focus of attention. This is a feature of high-producing organizations indicated by Likert (1961). Confucianism-influenced organizational communication, therefore, implies positive contributions to lower employee turnover, smaller number of grievances, more easily aroused company morale, and stronger employment commitment. These organizational characteristics are some of the measures of organizational effectiveness (Goldhaber, 1993).

Finally, this analysis identifies a new dimension of communication cost study. Most previous studies on communication costs are from the space perspective emphasizing the relationships between office location and costs maintaining contacts, especially by those employees who are relocated (Goddard, 1975; Pye, 1976; Thorngren, 1970). This study points out a direction toward the human relation aspect of communication cost. It may not be easily quantified from this perspective, but the significance and impact are apparently greater than those of the space perspective.

Conclusions

In this essay, we delineate Confucianism as the cultural root of the Asian Five Dragons. The impressive economic and social

progress has been remarkable over the past three decades in the areas of the Asian Five Dragons. The process of this development is complicated, and many articles and books about the development of the Five Dragons have been published. Although a number of general economic factors are used to interpret the success of the Asian Five Dragons, most scholars agree that cultural influence based on Confucianism is a major factor contributed to the success. Confucius develops a code of ethics that guides the interpersonal relationships of the familistic organizations. The acceptance of Confucian teachings by the Asian Five Dragons shapes a human-oriented workforce. It not only relatively reduces the communication cost, but also generates a greater organizational effectiveness.

The characteristics of Confucianism-influenced organizational communication identified in this study imply several strategies for effective organizational communication. These strategies are basically investing in preventive, as opposed to problem solving, measures for organizational effectiveness.

First, organizations can facilitate rule-learning of employees by investing more in orientation programs for new employees. These rule-learning programs can be based on the assumption that employees will stay and are encouraged to stay for a relatively long period of time.

Second, socio-emotional communication activities need to be geared toward establishing long term relationships among employees. For example, superficial conversations in cocktail parties can be

complemented with group activities that require more personal contacts and interdependent effort. Quality control circle, for instance, is an old but long-neglected tool to this effect. Third, motivational communication efforts can be based on themes that emphasize external competition and promote internal "we" feelings.

Some of these suggestions may not be totally new. Some of them, quality control circle, for example, has become popular after Japanese success stories in production management were widely recognized. Unfortunately, these programs are not broadly valued in the western organizations. The above strategies may become more evidently powerful when organizations go international or multicultural such as culturally diversified organizations, multinational corporations, overseas subsidiaries from the West to the East, and vice versa.

As implied in the analysis above, the Confucianism-influenced organizational communication also displays certain weakness spots. The in-group/out-group distinction, for example, may make the organization clannish and may reduce the possibility of communicating with the external environments and in turn reinforces the homogeneity and hurt the creativity. Nevertheless, this can hardly emerge as a problem in the Western organizations, given the high mobility, heterogeneity, and individualism in the Western society as a context. It will be interesting for future research to continue this line of research.

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Table 1

Confucian Principles of Interpersonal Comunication

Four Principles	Contents
Hierarchical relationship	Particularistic relationship Complementary social reciprocity Ingroup/outgroup distinction Essential intermediary and formality Overlap of personal and public relationships
Family system	Private relationship Paternalistic leadership Harmony is the first virtue Distrust of outgroup members Loyalty and commitment
Jen	Jen - benevolence, self-discipline, filial piety, brotherly love, and trust Yi - righteousness, faithfulness, and justice in social interaction Li - propriety, rite, and respect for social norms
Education emphasis	Providing education for all people without discrimination Ethical teachings

Table 2

Confucian Influence on Management/Leadership

Ideal State of Management	Leadership
To develop a secure working environment for all employees in the organization	Rectification of name - a process for a leader to correctly perceive his/her role behavior and the legitimate authority from it
Humanistic management: 1. Human nature is mutable 2. A committed employee is able to adapt to the changing environment 3. Mutual understanding between superior and subordinate is a key to organizational success	Sincerity - honesty to one's self and truthfulness toward employees: (1) five virtues to be pursued, and (2) five evils to be avoided

Table 3

Confucian Influence on Communication in the Organization

Interpersonal Relationship	Organizational Life
Explicit communication rules	Reduced uncertainty in organizational communication
Complimentary relationship	Socio-emotional communication prevails
Ingroup/outgroup distinction	Team building; life-time employment
Intermediary	Non-confrontational communication
Vague boundary between personal and public relationships	Conflict avoidance; consensus building; trust
Similar communication context	Facilitate communication and training

Table 4

The Preventive Communication Cost and Compensation in Confucianism-Influenced Organizations

Preventive Comm. Cost	Compensation
Rule-learning cost	Reduced guess work and uncertainty
Long-term interaction cost	Reduced apprehension and increased liking and mutual respect
Outgroup exclusion cost	Easier motivation
Intermediary cost	Reduced conflict
Personal contact cost	Loyalty and commitment
Education cost	Reduced misunderstanding and clarification efforts